

A

LETTER

To the CONTINUATOR

OF THE

Present State of our Controversy.

Laying open the *Folly* of his *Extravagant Boasting*, and the *Malice* of his *Willfull Forgeries*.

By *John Sergeant*.

With Allowance.

SIR, what you are I do not *know*; nor have any reason, from your carriage, to think you are much *worth* the knowing; and you did very prudently to mask your self under the disguise of a *private and obscure hand*, to hide the blushes which common shame would otherwise force even into a forehead of the blackest complexion. It is easy to discern by your furious Zeal, your Falshyng humour, and your Patronizing so fiercely that party which maintains that *All Christian Faith* which is held now *may be False*, that you are far from the Principles of a Genuin Church of England man, farther than a good Benefice may perhaps give you a Vocation, but rather some hot-brain'd Calvinist in *masquerade*, parboil'd by the scalding zeal against Popery into a stanch Protestant, which like Lobsters change their *hew and outward appearance*, but not their *Nature*. The Character you have given your self by your behaviour

Epist. Dedicatory.

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in

Epist. to the
Reader.

Ibid.

Ibid.

in your 41st. page ; is that you are a *Willfull* and *Bold* Calumniator ; who, trusting to the easy *Credulousness* of your Friends, and relying on the *Great Noise* your Numerous party are able to make, value not a straw what *manifest Falshoods* you publish. And, which is the *worst* Quality of a *Lyer*, that you are a *Careless*, *Open*, and *Confident* one. If this can be plainly made good against you, I am sure your rude and Unchristian carriage towards me justifies me for letting the world know you are guilty of these *Faults* of the *First Magnitude*. What prejudice this may do to your *Descants* all along upon other pieces writ by *Catholicks* you are to look to, and should have better consider'd when you thus *sacrific'd* your *Conscience* to your *Malice*; for if this be prov'd upon you, it will here stand upon *Publick Record*, and like your fellow-*Knights of the Post*, you are never to be believ'd in any thing you say either here or hereafter. Certainly Sir, a little more *Temperance* had done your Cause far more Right : For every man of an ordinary *Prudence* will vehemently suspect your sharp *Reflexions* are meerly *Romantick*, seeing you make the *Protestant Knight* still beat the *Popish Gyant*. What man of common *Reason* will, do you think, believe you, that the *Catholick Party* have in none of their *Books* spoke a word of *Sense*, or that (as you tell the Reader with much assurance) *never was Cause more intirely baffled* : Nay, in the full career of your ranting exaggerations, you aver without *Fear*, *Shame* or *Wit*, that your very *Footmen themselves esteem themselves an equall match for Jesuits*; and lest the *Credit* of your *Learned Footmen* should sink, or the sober part of the world should look upon them as self-conceited *Puppies* for having such a *high Esteem* of themselves, you hold them up by the chin, and tell us very sadly, that you think they have *satisfy'd the World* they are not *mistaken* in this opinion of themselves. Now, all this while there was but *one Footman*, whose name, to *ridicule* a *Roman-Catholick* writer, was prefixt to a pamphlet, which in all likelihood might have been written by some such shamming Gentleman as your self. I wonder you did not add *Protestant Broom-men*, *Kennel-rakers* and *Chimney-Sweepers* ; for none can doubt but some of these may have as much *Knaveish wit* as a *Footman*. But it was your *Kindness* to *Catholicks* not to tyrannize too much over them, or depress them with such ignoble comparisons ; and therefore you did them the *honour* to allow them fit *matches* to run a *Controversy-race* with your thrice-*Reverend Foot-men*. And, by your *Discourse*, 'tis a *high-honour* too ; for you tell us p. 45.

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that the R. F. Sabran is now grown more famous in the world from his new Antagonist the Footman. I hope I may use your own words so I apply them better; and tell the Reader that I admire at the heat and bitterness of that little Satyr, your ridiculously-malicious self.

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2. Notwithstanding your *Ill performance*, I frankly acknowledge that a *History* of what Books have been writ *pro* and *con* in our Controversies is a very laudable *Design*; and had you observ'd the impartiality of an *Historian* by onely relating what had been done in that kind, and then referr'd your Reader to the Books you mention'd, and left him to judge of the performances on both sides by those Books themselves, you had deserv'd a due Commendation. But you could not content your self with matter of *Fact*, but would needs enter upon the matter of *Right* too; and this, with Reflexions wholly made up of Vapour, Insolence, silly Amplifications, Ironies, Invectives; and oftimes open Falshoods. For example, *Never did man set pen to Paper* (as F. Sabran) *with such a stock of Ignorance and Confidence together.* p. 4. *whose stock is Confidence.* p. 45. *He has neither Learning, nor good manners,* ibid. One would wonder, by the way, Sir, where your Breeding lies. But as for the *Representer*, he is quite stript of Honesty and Wit both.—*He seems* (say you) *to have struggled a little with himself before he could get the better of his Conscience.* p. 11. *The Confidence of this vain man—He* (his Protestant Antagonist) *has thought fit to give him up as a priviledg'd person, who is past either Sense or Modesty, or hopes of being reclaim'd,* p. 12. That is, in more honest terms, his Antagonist acknowledges himself baffled, and I perceive by your p. 4. that you are about giving up F. Sabran too upon the same score. Again—*That honest sincere man that cannot endure false dealing, but was dropt down from heaven to be the Scourge and Censor of a Licentious age—by a strange kind of Metamorphosis from an Angell of Light transforming himself into a Spirit of Darkness.* p. 43. And lastly, *that He is an Ass in a Lyons Skin.* p. 44. Pray good sweet angry Sr, lay aside your Passion a while; and do but consider a little how ridiculous you make your self, and clap the long ears on your own noddle. Had you profess'd your self a *Thersites*, and a master of Invective Rhetorick, none would have wonder'd at you for following your Vocation; But the Jest is, you will needs make your self all this while a *Master of Ceremonies*, to teach others good manners, and yet the Academy of Scolds at Billingsgate cannot furnish one with baser and fouler Language. Were you writing against the per-

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son, and had at the same time prov'd his Demerit answerable to your words, then indeed *Smart* language, so it be *True*, may some times pass, may be needfull; but to fall upon him so severely in an undue occasion, and with such a furious career of extravagant railing, does too visibly proceed from the *Impotency* and *Uneasiness* of your *Passion*. Could a mad Dog speak, I know not (tho' you perhaps may) what worse language he could foam out than *Ass* and *Devil*. Whence I Congratulate to the Gentleman the happy omen, that he could deserve the heat and bitterness of such little Satyr's. Thus our impartial Historian treats the one party; But on the other he bestows all along the Magnificent Titles of *Excellent*, *Learned*, *Ingenious*, *Incomparable*, and all-to-be Reverences them with his Termagant Hyperbolical Commendations. And now, Reader, is it a Straw's matter whether such a Writer praises or reviles a man; or rather are not his *Elogiums* a *Disgrace*, and his *Invectives* a high *Honour* and *Commedation* in the opinion of any *Moderate* Reader?

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3. My turn comes next; and any man will see how Dr. St. and his good Friends are nettled, by your pelting me so unmercifully.

4. Your First Falshood is, that I begun to carry on this Controversy after the Reflector had writ his. This I affirm to be *True*; For, the First Catholick Letter was also mine. And, tho' my Name was not to it, yet I still own'd it for mine in my following pieces. Which if you read, you could not but see; if you did not, you are a strange disregarder of Truth or Sincerity, to pass such rash Censures upon Books you never so much as read. And, if this were so, as I much fear, it puts me into some doubt whether you ever read any of the Catholick Books you Censur'd so deeply; but, like a right Honest man, right or wrong, shot your bolts at random.

Ibid.

5. Your Second Falshood is, that Dr. St. has reply'd to my first Four Letters; And this is a most Notorious Banger. For, first, it is shown in my Fifth Letter Page by Page to every Examiner's Eye, from p. 154. to p. 173. that he has omitted so much as to take notice of (much more to Answer) Thirty Nine parts of Forty of my First and Third Letters. Next, he owes me an Answer to the Second. Thirdly, he has not answer'd one word to my Fourth. And so two or three shameless Untruths must serve for an Answer to those four Treatises. Which, I suppose, is the modern way of Controversy you told us of p. 20. However, you tell us p. 40. that Dr. St's peece was an *Excellent Discourse*; that is, 'tis one of your Geese metamorphos'd to a Swan, by your glosy commendations.

commendations. However, it discover'd my *Vanity*, & that's enough in all Conscience. But Sr, are You a Christian, even in a Latitudinarian sense, who call it *Vanity* to assert that the Faith now held by Christians is truly Christ's, and consequently *True*, or that it has Grounds to prove it True that it did descend from Him, which is the Grand Contest between Dr St. and me? And on this occasion let me ask you how you durst tell the World in the Title to your Dedictory, that a Book writ to maintain the *Possible Falshood of Faith*, is writ *In Defence of the Church of England*; as if it were her Doctrine, that *all Christian Faith may be a Lye*; or how a Chaplain to an Arch-Bp. durst approve a Pamphlet, that makes that Church guilty of that half Atheisticall Tenet, which her best Writers and most Genuin Sons ever abhor'd. But — *Hæc est hora vestra, & potestas tenebrarum.*

6. Your Third Falshood is, that I writ *Contradictions*, which has been confuted *at large* in an elaborate Discourse (Fifth-Cath. Letter p. 8. to p. 18.) where every particular Contradiction objected is solv'd by a clear state of the Question; which the Learned Dr. would needs mistake throughout his whole Answer. However, *it was expected this would have stop't my mouth.* But alas, when *vain* men promise to themselves Unreasonable things, how strangely their Expectations fail them! 'Tis not *Nonsense* clad in *fine words*, nor all the Spitefull Reflexions of men, who, I see plainly, have not the least value for Truth, that can shock me or fright me from defending it.

7. Your Fourth Falshood is, that the *Blackloist Heresy* was now like to be brought on the Stage again; meaning, that my Doctrine about Tradition was peculiar to Mr. Blacklow. The contrary to which I have shown to every honest Reader's eye in a particular Treatise (*Clypeus Septemplex* p. 209. to p. 250) and the very Reverend F. Warner in his * *Anti-Heaman* tells Dr. Burnet he discovers his Ignorance in saying it was newly invented. Lastly, my Fifth Letter p. 24. has Forestall'd this objection. But no Sincerity is to be expected from such willfull Asserters of baffled Falshoods. Disprove a Calumny never so evidently, all they do, in stead of invalidating our Reasons or Testimonies, is to say the same over again with a steel'd Impudence, as if nothing had been alledg'd against it.

8. Your Fifth Falshood is, that I have formerly eat my words.

Your Sixth, that I did this, when I was cited to Rome to be censur'd for those dangerous Hereticall Propositions which I am now again breaching in England. Both of which are most Impudent Untruths

* See Third Cath Letter. p. 21.

* Clypeus
Septemplex.
p. 10.

truths. This appears both by the kind *Monitio* sent me from the *Sacred Congregation*, where 'tis manifest they were aware that I had declar'd my self to speak [*de Regula Externa Fidei seu de Traditione Ecclesie*] of the *Extrinsicall Rule of Faith* or the *Tradition of the Church*. As also, that in the circumstance of our Controversy I had maintain'd [*debere eam esse evidentem*] this Rule ought to be Evident. All which they allow'd, and requir'd no more of me but only that *Mindfull of the words of the Apostle* [*I am a Debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the Wise and to the Unwise*] I would clear some Propositions contain'd something obscurely in my Books, by reason of the ambiguity of the word Evidence, viz. whether it was meant of the Evidence of the *Mysteries*, or of the *Motives* to Faith; which Mistake bred the whole Misunderstanding. This I did by a hundred Instances, and most pregnant and convincing Reasons in my *Declaratio*; and, this done, those severest Judges of *Unsound Doctrine*, remain'd satisfy'd; and to your greater confusion I have the Original of the *Monitio* and the other Records in my hands still. For farther Evidence that I was neither put to *Eat my words*, or *Retract* the least tittle in my books, nor was ever Cited to Rome, I could allege those Right Reverend Personages, Bishop *Leyburn*, and Bishop *Gifford*; of which the former was at Rome all the time of the Contest: the Other, though at *Paris*, yet was acquainted with all the particulars of it: As also those Reverend Divines mention'd *Fifth Cath. Letter. p. 21.* who examin'd the Propositions chiefly objected; and attested under their hands that their Sense was not in my Books but the direct contrary: I could produce likewise Multitudes of Other Persons, both Divines and Lay-men, of unblemish'd Credit, who can witness the same. And yet this Frontless man thinks to out-face the world with an open and manifest Lye, to second Dr. St's wilfull Forgeries; though he knows how I answer'd in my *Clypeus Septemplex* and *Vindicia* what the Dr. for want of better Stuff, did cire out of his Friend *Lominus*, and that in the First Section of my Fifth Catholick Letter I particularly shew'd by unquestionable Authority every tittle of Dr. St's Calumnies to be most False: and, lastly, what Approbations from the most Knowing and most Orthodox Catholicks of the best Quality my Books have had. Which done I close * my Discourse with this Recapitulation [The Sum of my present Defence is this: Eight Divines of great Repute, appointed by the Arch-Bishop of *Paris*, and admitted by my Adversary himself, do unanimously attest that

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* Fifth Cath:
Letter. p. 30.

"the Sense condemn'd is not in my Books, but the contrary.
 "My Judge clears me; The Censurers are commanded to make
 "me Satisfaction. The Highest Tribunal allows my Plea and
 "acquits me. Primates, Arch-Bishops, Bishops, the Sorbon, E-
 "minent Divines, and even those who take another way in their
 "Writings, approve and commend my Doctrine, and most of
 "them in very high and extraordinary expressions. My own Su-
 "perior does the same; nay, even those who were formerly
 "highly prejudiced, declare themselves satisfy'd in it. So that
 "poor Dr. St. is left alone to ballance against all this weighty
 "Authority; with one *Lominus*, a meer *Utopian* or Man in the
 "Moon; on whose sole *No-Authority* he grounds all his senseless
 "Calumnies.] All which particulars were shewn there at large.
 "To enforce those *Testimonials*, I added [I desire the Reader to
 "reflect that those Judges, Approvers and Commanders of my
 "Books and Doctrine liv'd generally in *diverse* and far-distant
 "Nations, were of *different* Faculties and Universities, of *different*
 "Educations, *different* Orders, and (to some degree) of *different*
 "Principles & Interests, *diverse* of them utterly unknown to *Me*,
 "or I to *Them*. So that, 'tis impossible to imagine that any thing
 "but the force of *Truth*, & the *Integrity* of my way of proving the
 "Certainty of our Faith, as to its having been taught by
 "*Jesus Christ*, could make them *conspire* to *allow* or *abet* my
 "Books so *heartily* and *Unanimously*. Nor could there be any
 "Human inducements to make them so strangely partial to a
 "*Private* man, every way inconsiderable, and of *no* Esteem at all
 "but what my *Writings* and *Principles* gave me.] And now, Rea-
 "der, admire at the Impudence of this man, and be Judge thy self
 "whether he has not forsworn all Common Honesty, and renounc'd
 "all shame, who, after all this and much more read by him in the
 "Book he is here Censuring, does, before any man *has* disprov'd
 "one tittle of it, or (I am sure) *can*, in this very book of his, where
 "he pretends to give a faithful account of the Contents of each
 "piece, and of the performances of each of our Controvertists, not
 "only *not acquaint* the Reader with this my Defence, but *without*
 "any Authority, nay *against* such an Uncontestable Authority, ven-
 "tures to throw about his *headstrong* and willful Forgeries; as that
 "I *contradict* d my self, *Eat my Words*, was *cited to Rome*; that what
 "I write in my Letters is held there a *dangerous Heresy*, that no
 "man of *Sense* will be *hired to read three Pages in my Book*, &c. An
 "Evident sign of a *Nonplus* Cause, which puts its Defenders to such
 "hard shifts as to have recourse to Empty Vapour, Huge Noises,
 "and Notorious Lies to uphold it.

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9. You proceed and tell us next, that *my Letter has met with as few Readers as I have Admirers*. Here also there want some Grains of Truth, for I am inform'd there are not a Hundred left of my *Fifth Letter*; and sending to buy some of my *First*, I was told there were so few left that they are rais'd to double the price they were vend'd for in the beginning. Yet your Comfort is, *there is no danger in the World of my Last Letter's doing any mischief, since you do not believe it possible to hire any man of Sense to read three pages in it*. Alas, poor Gentleman! I doubt not but you have a strong Faith, which so blinds you that you cannot see how ridiculous you make your self and your Friends. You gave us to understand by telling us Dr. St. declines the Task, that he *despairs of Answering that Letter fairly and upon the Square*; and yet, when 'tis so clearly Visible that the *Regret* that you cannot answer it *vexes and galls you to the heart*, you, like a right pleasant man, pretend to be much Comforted that 'tis not worth the *Answering*. A very cheap and easy method to confute all the Books in the World. But, Sir, I am to tell you very *Discomfortable* news; which is, that the best Wits of our Nation, (to whom chiefly I write) men not a jot inferiour to your Great Dr himself, have not only read those Letters of mine, but given such a Character of them for *Unanswerable*, as is not modest for me to repeat. And I have been told from a person of worth, that the very Reverend *F.W.* after his perusing some of my Letters, did honour them with this *Elogium*, that they *had laid Dr. St. so flat that he would never be able to rise again*. And, I am so confident of the Goodness of my cause, that I do here promise Him and the World very faithfully that I shall make his words good; or rather, by what follows here, it will appear I have done it already.

P. 41. For you tell us, that *A very Learned Person*, in compassion, as you suppose, to the poor headstrong-man, hath undertaken to Answer not only my *Fifth Letter*, but the other Discourses of the Romanists about Tradition. As much as to say, the Dr. has enough of me. I must confess, Sir, this would be very *Learned* indeed; for he must, in the main passages, either confute *First Principles*, upon which I insist, or else (which is equally impossible) shew that they do not stand engag'd against Dr. St's Discourse. I know you can easily nick-name any thing an *Answer*, though never so trivial or wide from the purpose. But that we may hold to the Point which I foresee you are flinching from, I will save your very *Learned Person* a great deal of trouble; and, if he can but shew us that any Christian now living has any Reason that concludes the Faith he holds

holds is the same which *Christ* and his Apostles taught, but by means of Tradition, I promise him I will be his Convert. This is the point in hand, and pray, Sir, let it be your care that your *very Learned Person* do not *very Learnedly* run quite away from it into Impertinent Digressions, as the *most Learned Dr. St.* did; for, if he does, I shall not be so *very Unlearned* as to follow his Ramble.

10. But is it not very pleasant that you should talk of *Compassion* to me who have left your Dr. in such a *pitifull and miserable* Condition, that he thinks it not Creditable for him to proceed further with me *himself*? I suppose he *left me off*, as the Representer's Antagonist did Him, or, as you Phrase it (p. 12.) *has thought fit to give me up, as a Privileg'd Person who is past hopes of being reclaim'd*; the true *English* of which every Prudent Reader will guess at. It would have done well tho' to have mingled a little *Charity* with his *Compassion*; for, certainly, he had done a great Cure to have set me to rights: For I must confess I am so *headstrong* as still to maintain that *Errour* *Nonplus* has shewn clearly that the Stupendiously Learned Dr. St. has *never a Principle* to help himself with: and the Dr. owes a Cure to this stiff-neck'd humour of mine, since he contributed to it by *modestly* declining now these fifteen Years to answer that Book, or clear himself from being *A Man of No Principles*. I am so *headstrong* too, that I will not let all the present Faith of Christianity be held *Possible to be False*, or (which is the same) *not-True*. Nay, I am so *headstrong*, that, when I see plainly that scarce one of my *Reasons* are spoken to *candidly* and *fairly*, nor so much as one of them *answer'd*, I will not depart from my *Conclusion*, because the Incomparable Dr. St. prevaricates, flouts and falsifies. You see, Sir, of what nature my Disease of *headstrongness* is; and, if the *more-then-very-Learned Dr. St.* cannot cure me himself, I much fear your *other Person*, who is no more but *very-Learned* will scarce do any good of me.

11. However, 'tis a Kindness that an Answer is *promis'd* me; But by *Whom*? I peremptorily * *Challeng'd* the Dr. *Himself* who is my proper Adversary; and is he so shy to *meet me* and *vindicate himself*, when so many *heavy* Charges lie upon him, and particularly that *heaviest* of making All Christian Faith *Possible to be False* or (which is the same) *not-True*? Can he have any business that *more nearly* concerns his Credit than *this* does? Or does he hope that *another Person* can know his

* Fifth Cath. Letter. p. 153

Thoughts and Reasons, and, so, defend him, better than *Himself* can? Neither of these can with any Sense be thought or pretended. 'Tis manifest then that he is at his Wit's end how to Reply pertinently; and therefore, seeing himself press'd closer and closer, and all his witty Evasions discover'd, he very fairly quits the Field, and sets on some *perdu* Bungler, furnish'd with some Wit and a Plausible Investive Style, but little or no Sense; and who has as little Credit to lose as I shall get Honour by meddling with him; and this for no other end but that it may be *Trumpeted aloud* to the world in your next *Continuation*, how *Incomparably* J. S. has been *Answer'd*. Or, in case he be of any Repute in the eye of the world, yet for fear of danger he shall keep himself invisible in his Misty Cloak, without owning his Name, but come out upon the Stage *Maskt*, as your *Continuating* self does; and then (as your self also, secur'd after the same manner, has now done) he may without blushing, tell his Readers as many *Falshoods* as he pleases, and yet *save his Credit*; for then, like a Slander got among the Gossips, none knows on whom to fix it.

12. Well, but how will this very *Learned Person* Answer me? Why, you tell us he will answer me in

An Historical Discourse concerning Tradition.

Incomparable! I demand an Answer to *nine or ten Treatises*, and particularly to my *Several Reasons* alledg'd in them, of which, God be prais'd, there is good store; and this very *Learned Person* will undertake to *Answer* them *All* in a *Hillip*. Was it ever heard of since the World stood, that *Intrinsical Arguments* or *Reasons* are to be *answer'd* by *histories*? Or, can these men give the world a Clearer Demonstration that they are perfectly baffled, than to trick-off the *Direct Answers* they owe to my *Arguments* by such an *Indirect Wile*? Every Reader sees what a *Candid* and *Clear* Method I observe in all my Answers to the Dr. I take his Books and Reasons *end-ways* as they lie in order *Page by Page*; so that if I *run astray* from the Question in hand, or *omit* any thing of weight, 'tis easily *discoverable*, and I may be presently *caught*, for they know *where* to have me. On the other side my Adversaries can never be brought to follow any *such* Fair Method: But they fall to write a *Treatise* about some Subject, which by the common words in the Title looks a little a-kin to our business; and then they catch at some passages here and there incidentally scatter'd and disorderly Collected

lected ; and, the true Sense and force of them, which they had as found in their due place, and the Tenour of the Discourse being *lost* or *perverted*, they fall to play upon those words ; but where the Answer is to *all the Particular Reasons* contain'd in my Book, we may go look. Something is sleightly and wittily said to a *few scraps* of it, but the *Main*, or the *Book it self*, is left unspoken to. This untoward Method has been exactly follow'd by Dr. Tillotson throughout his *Rule of Faith*, and in his *Preface to his Sermons* ; and the same is most Religiously observ'd by Dr. St in his late pretended Answer to some of my Letters ; and particularly in his *Examination* of the Council of *Trent*, where he runs quite away from the whole business, as is shewn, *Fifth Cath. Letter. p. 152. 153.*

13. But, since this odd kind of Historian has undertaken to pay Dr. St's Debts, 'tis but fitting I should give him a *Catalogue* of them.

Imprimis, He owes me an Answer to the many Arguments in *Faith Vindicated*, demonstrating that the Rule by which we are to know *what Christ taught*, must be *Impossible to be False*, or *Infallible*. This was apply'd in the *Inferences* at the End of that Treatise against the two Great Doctors ; and it was shown there (I dare tell them) *Unanswerably*, that unless they can confute *That Book* (which I am sure they dare not fairly *Attempt*) all they do write or can write of Controversy is at once quite overthrown. Since if it be made good that Christian Faith *must have such* Conclusive Motives or *such* a Rule to establish it, and recommend it to those who are to embrace it, and they have *none such*, nay disclaim the having *any such Rule*, they can never prove it *True*, that any thing which themselves, or any else, do now hold, is indeed Christ's Doctrine.

Item, he owes me an Answer to *Errour Nonplust*, which prov'd him to be *A Man of No Principles*. and to the several Discourses against each of those pretended Principles of his respectively : for which I have less reason to forbear him any longer, because he has in this long Term of Fifteen years, (at least,) Endeavour'd to clear some other debts, but never went about to pay me *one single Farthing* ; which was very *Unconscionable*.

Item, He owes me an Answer to my *Method*, Printed at the end of *Errour-Nonplust* ; which comprises the summ of my Doctrine about Tradition, and reduces it to *First Principles* ; which, therefore, since such *Principles* will not be brought to *Contradict*

One another, Dr. St. is the most proper man in the World to Oppose and Answer, as having No Principles at all.

* See Fifth
Cath. Letter.
p. 154. 155.
156. and p.
164 to p. 173
* *ibid.* p. 156.
to p. 165.

Item, He owes me an Answer to my *First* and *Third Letters*; in regard he has omitted to speak to * *Thirty Nine* parts of *Forty* in them; and his pretended Answer to the single *Fortieth* part, has been shown in my *Fifth Letter* to be *none*.

Item, He owes me an Answer to my *Second Letter*; * the *Reflector*, being, (poor man!) *non-solvent*.

Item, He owes me an *Full Answer* to my *Fourth Letter* laying open the *Vanity* of his Insignificant *Guildhall-Hall Sermon*; to which he has hitherto said *Nothing*. I add, *nor ever can*, with the *least* show of Reason.

Item, He owes me a *Compleat, Distinct and Direct* answer to my whole *Fifth Letter*, & all the *several Discourses* in it; to which, if we may trust you, he now declines to speak.

Lastly, he owes me an Account why, in his *Appendix* to *Dr. T's Rule of Faith*, he undertook to confute *Tradition*, and yet wilfully mistook the *Nature* of the Thing he was to impugn; as is shown *Fifth Cath. Letter*, p. 6. and 7. which renders that whole *Appendix Insignificant*.

14. Now, Sir, since 'tis Impossible that all the Books concerning *Tradition* can with any sense be said to be answer'd, till the *Particular Reasons* they insist on be distinctly reply'd to; and 'tis ridiculous to expect this from a *Historical Discourse*, I see we must set our hearts at rest and expect no Answer at all but only some sleeveless Discourse by a very large *Synecdoche*, or rather a far-stretcht *Catachresis*, miscall'd an Answer. However, I shall demand this Justice of you, that you would put down all these particular Treatises as *unanswer'd* in an Appendix to this your *Continuation of the present State of the Controversy* (as you *ridiculously* call it, by the same figure as the French Parson call'd the Devill *The man of the Sin*) And do not brag that *Dr. T's Rule of Faith* is not yet reply'd to; for, besides what has been done already, I am inform'd it will be *punctually* and *particularly Answer'd*: And, to requite your kindness, I hope by that time you write your next, to help you with some others to furnish out your Narrative, and make you stand in need of some new Fallhoods and *Invectives* to save the Credit of your Freinds, who are so laudably and meritoriously employ'd in maintaining that the faith of all Christians in the world may be a *Ly*. If your *Historicall Discourser* fails of this performance,

mance, I shall not leave the Point or the Question to dance after his impertinent Voluntaries. It will, in that case, be an abundant satisfaction to the world that I show by detail what he has left unreply'd to, & still insist upon a *full & direct Answer* to my several Reasons or Discourses. But pray tell him that *Scornfull Jeers* and *Open Falshoods*, tho' never so briskly, and *confidently* deliver'd, are no competent *Answers* to *Arguments*, and I have reason to fear he will bring *no other*, or rather I am sure he *cannot*.

15. I would gladly find some way to save your Friends this vast Labour, and excuse them from this Impossible Task: Wherefore, since 'tis Unmercifull to press *poor Debtors* to pay more than they are *able*, therefore *out of Compassion* to your *head-strong Party*, I will come to this fair composition with them; that if Dr. St. can answer me but *one single* Argument which I will bring to prove, that he *cannot*, by his Principles, maintain it to be True, that what you or *Any* now hold is *Christ's Doctrine*, nor consequently that the present Christian Faith it self is *True*: Also, if he can bring but *One* Argument himself, which (according to his Principles) does *conclude* that what *he* or any other Christian now holds, is *Christ's Doctrine*, and, so, *True*; I will pardon the *Vast Sums* he owes me, and quit all scores between us; nay more I will acknowledge all the Guilded Bubbles in your frothy Books to be solid sense, and make you Publick Satisfaction for having oppos'd you hitherto. I hope the Reader will think there was never in the world a *kinder Creditour*, considering the *long scroll* of *what* he is indebted to me for, and *how long* much of it has been due. Your Argument I am to expect. Mine is ready; premising first this Lemma, that

[*What's True is (in our case) Impossible to be False.*] For, we are not speaking here of *future Contingents*, or of such cases where the Changeableness of the matter may *vary* the Truth of the Proposition as affirm'd at *Present*, but of what *has* determinately *past* or *not past*; whence what truly *has been Taught* by Christ is impossible now *not to have been Taught by him*. This Evident Truth fore-laid, I argue thus.

No Proof from Reason that *does not Evidently conclude*, nor Testimony that is *Fallible*, can prove a thing *Impossible to be false*.

Therefore no such Proof or Testimony can prove a thing to be *True*. Lemma.

But

But Dr. St. allows no *Conclusive Evidence* previous to Faith, that *Christ* taught such or such a Doctrine, nor any Testimony but what's *Fallible*.

Therefore Dr. St. cannot prove it *True*, that the Faith which *he* or any other Christian holds is *Christ's Doctrine*; nor consequently, that Christian Faith it self is *True*.

16. The Conclusiveness of this Argument I undertake to make good, let him attack it where he will. Here is no Sham, Jeer, Ill Language, nor any of your or his little Tricks, but plain downright Reason. And, since I am forc'd by your Indirect carriage to *Rigorous Discourse*, I expect from him the Rigorous Duty of a Respondent; viz. to *Deny, Grant* or *Distinguish* the severall propositions, and he shall have the same Return from me. I shall expect at the same time when he speaks to this Discourse, *his Argument*; concluding (by his Principle) that what *Himself* or *Any Other* Christian now holds, is indeed *Christ's Doctrine*; and, so, *True*. And, if he refuses to afford me that moderate Satisfaction, he rejects my kind offer of such a fair Composition: and so he will stand yet engag'd to give me pertinent and distinct Answers to all those Treatises and the severall Arguments contain'd in them which strike at his Tenets: And if he thinks it his Interest to joyn issue with me in such close and rigorous Discourse, I do here promise him, that there shall not be one word of *Raillery* (to which I am unwillingly drawn by his and his Friends carriage) nor the least kind of *Excursion*; but *Pertinent* and *Plain* Arguing, according to the Rules of exact Logick; and the same I shall expect from him. In order to which I make him this *Fair Offer*, that, which of us soever defects into any *Irregular Method*, other than direct *Arguing* or *Answering*, shall be held to be *Nonplust*, and to have *Lost his Credit*. Every honest man will see that this Proposall is both *Fair* in it's self, and *Equall* to both sides; and argues a Sincere Intention in the Proposer that *Truth may appear*. And therefore, if he *dis-accepts* this Offer or *declines* this *Method*, it will become manifest that he is utterly *Lost*, as he is a Maintainer of the Cause depending between us.

17. By the way I desire to know from the Dr. why this one Argument of mine has not given a *Full Answer* to both his Books against the *Council of Trent*, nay, to all he hath written or shall write, in the Judgment of every Intelligent man. Or why those Discourses which the Authour himself is forbidden by his own Principles,

Principles, to affirm that they contain a word of *Truth* in them, can deserve any Answer at all. Indeed, if he will renounce his shallow Principles, and beginning on a new score, undertake to shew, that such or such a *Reason* is *Conclusive*, or such a *Testimony* is *Infallible*; He might, in *that case*, pretend to *prove* that to be *True* which is built upon them, and so deserve an Answer; otherwise what man, that is not over-courteous, will take himself to be oblig'd to reply to Great Books, in which, by the Authors own Confession, no man living knows whether there be so much as *one word* of *Truth* in them? Whence follows Evidently that Dr. St. ought in true Reason either to take up better Principles, or to leave off Writing Controversy; nay, even to leave off the Defending his own former Books. For 'tis a strange and desperate piece of Magnanimity for a Writer to maintain that to be a *Truth* which his own Principles force him to confess he knows not but it *may be False*; that is, *he knows not whether it be True or no?*

18. If you or your Friends continue resolute to pursue this Impertinent Topick that my Doctrine about Tradition is held by the Governours of our Church to be Unsound in Faith, you stand oblig'd to prove, First, that the *only* Book you rely on, *viz. Lominus*, is *Authentique*, and to be Credited, notwithstanding that the Gravest Testimonies in the Catholick Church (summ'd up above) by their Carriage and Express words have declar'd the direct contrary. And withall, you are to let us know particularly *who* it was that *Authenticated* that Book, *who Licensed* or recommended it to the Press? What Printers, Authors, or Places *name* is to it; and to tell us the Reason *why* it was not *own'd*, or *allow'd* by Authority, being Printed in *Paris*, where the Laws enjoyn all these particulars under great Penalties. And if it have not *these* Qualifications which honest Writings may have, then you are to shew in what it differs from a *Libell*; as likewise to acquaint the World why you thought fit to rely on such a Book to prove my Doctrin *Unsound*, rather than on the Gravest Authorities of all sorts in the Roman Catholick Church, attesting the contrary under their hands so *publickly*. Next, you are to *disprove* what has been *allegd* by me in the First Section of my *Fifth Catholick Letter*, to confute that Calumny, where such a Concurrence of Reasons & Testimonies are produc't, that it would shame Impudence it self to contest it. And, lastly, you are to *satisfy* the world *how*, if this were so,

so, it could be possible that I should now *still* write and *maintain* the same Doctrin, & yet *no* man, but your selves, *accuse* me. If all this, which would convince even *Scepticism* it self, will not stop your Mouths, I offer your self a Friendly meeting before some Persons of Honour of both Communions; where I shall produce the well-attested Originals and Authentick Records (yet in my hands) belonging to that matter; which will shew you to your eye what Notorious Falshoods you have Printed against me. Why should you not, *if you have spoke Truth*, pull off your Vizard, and *appear* to *justify* it? Why should an *Honest* Man in an *Honest* Cause be so shy to *shew his Face*? Or, if the Conscioufness of your Forgeries make you *asham'd* to do it in your *own* Person, at least appear by a *Proxy*. If all this will not keep you from obstinately persisting to oppose *known Truths*, I can only say you are wilfully *possess'd* with a Spirit of *Lying*, and deserve to be *Possed*.

19. I am sorry you would needs force me to use such plain Language: Were your Demerits the Effects of Frailty, Humanity would teach me to compassionate them. But, being both perfectly Wilfull and Wicked to boot, I should wrong Truth and be Unjust to my self, if I had not call'd your Faults by their *own Ill Names*, and I have done no more. Pray desire the Dr. and his Friends, for Truth's sake and their own Credit, that they will not so plainly convince the World, that they decline *Answering* and fall to *Bantering*; and withall assure them that if they vainly *hope* to avail themselves of *open Lyes*, I shall not want means both to *clear* my self and to *expose* them to the *Scorn* and *Shame* of Mankind. So wishing you heartily and Charitably what you most need, *Sincerity*, I rest

Your Humble Servant,

J. S.

L O N D O N,

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